CLAIMS

1. A method of configuring a user interface of computer-assisted equipment according to a service program, comprising the steps of:

said computer-assisted equipment transmitting a message to a remote computer;

said remote computer determining that said service program available on said remote computer is suitable for use with said computer-assisted equipment, said determining being based on said message; and

said remote computer influencing operation of said user interface of said computer-assisted equipment in accordance with said service program.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said computer-assisted equipment provides entertainment.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said computer-assisted equipment is an audio reproduction system.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said computer-assisted equipment is a remote control device that controls functions of a video entertainment system, said video entertainment system receiving content from said remote computer.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining step includes said remote computer informing said computer-assisted equipment that at least one additional service program is available, said computer-assisted equipment selecting from among said service program and said at least one additional service program.

6. The method of claim 5, additionally comprising said remote computer receiving a selection from said computer-assisted equipment, said selection indicating which of said service program and said at least one additional service program a user has selected.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said remote computer is a general-purpose computer.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said message is a service request that indicates that said computer-assisted equipment is ready to operate cooperatively with said remote computer.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising said remote computer transmitting content to said computer-assisted equipment under the control of said service program.

10. In a computer-assisted appliance, a method for interacting with a remote computer that executes a service program, comprising the steps of:
transmitting a service request to said remote computer;
receiving an interface instruction that enables said remote computer to execute a portion of a particular service program;
transmitting a user input to said remote computer in accordance with said interface instruction; and
receiving content from said remote computer in response to said interface instruction.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said service request includes an indication that said computer-assisted appliance is available and is ready to receive said service program.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein said remote computer is one of a portable and a desktop computing device.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein said appliance is an audio system that conveys music, and wherein said content includes a music file.

5　　14. The method of claim 13, wherein said user input is a selection of a title of said music file.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein said service program includes instructions that enable said audio system to display a list of music selections.

10　　16. The method of claim 10, wherein said service program influences the function of a display located on said computer-assisted appliance.

17. The method of claim 10, wherein said service program influences a
15　function of a remote control device used to control an entertainment device.

18. A computer-assisted appliance comprising:
an interface module for communicating with a remote computer and for receiving an interface instruction from said remote computer;
20　　a processor for translating said interface instruction into an appliance-specific instruction for use by said computer-assisted appliance; and
a user interface controller for presenting information to a user and receiving information from said user in accordance with said appliance-specific instruction.

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19. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 18, wherein said interface module communicates with said remote computer by way of a wireless communications interface.

30　　20. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 18, wherein said interface module also remotely controls a video entertainment system by way of a wireless interface.

21. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 18, wherein said appliance-specific instruction enables said computer-assisted appliance to display text to said user via a user interface coupled to said user interface controller.

22. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 18, wherein said appliance-specific instruction enables said computer-assisted appliance to display graphics to said user via a user interface coupled to said user interface controller.

23. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 18 further comprising a memory coupled to said processor for storing content received by way of said interface module.

24. In a remote computer, a method for cooperating with computer-assisted equipment, comprising the steps of:

receiving a request for service from said computer-assisted equipment;

determining that a service program suitable for use with said computer-assisted equipment is available, said service program including an interface instruction;

transmitting said interface instruction to said computer-assisted appliance; and

, cooperating with said computer-assisted appliance in accordance with said service program.

25. The remote computer of claim 24, wherein said determining step includes receiving a selection as to which service program has been selected by a user of said computer-assisted equipment.

26. The remote computer of claim 24, wherein said remote computer is interfaced to a network and wherein said remote computer communicates with a network location available on said network.

27. The remote computer of claim 24, wherein said transmitting step is accomplished by way of transmitting said interface instruction using a wireless interface.

28. A computer-assisted appliance comprising:

means for communicating with a remote computer;

means for receiving an instruction from said remote computer;

means for converting said instruction to at least one appliance-specific instruction; and

means for accepting an input from a user in accordance with said appliance-specific instruction.

29. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 28, wherein said means for communicating with said remote computer includes a wireless communications transmitter.

30. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 28, wherein said means for receiving an instruction from said remote computer includes a wireless communications receiver.

31. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 28 further comprising means for displaying information to a user of said computer-assisted appliance.

32. The computer-assisted appliance of claim 28, further comprising means for remotely controlling an entertainment device.

33. One or more computer-readable media having computer-readable instructions thereon which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving a service query from a computer-assisted appliance;

determining that an application program suitable for use with said computer-assisted appliance is available;

configuring an interface of said computer-assisted appliance; and

receiving information from said computer-assisted appliance, said information being conveyed from said interface and resulting from a user interacting with said interface.

34. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 33, wherein said receiving a service query step includes receiving an indicator that informs said computer of a function performed by said computer-assisted appliance.

35. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 33, wherein said determining step includes said computer searching through a list of application programs.

36. One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 33, wherein said method further comprises said computer-assisted appliance prompting said user for said input.